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THE TERRITORY OF MAGELLAN

BY

MARRION WILCOX

Nearly one-fourth of the entire area of the Republic of Chile is embraced in the Territorio de Magallanes, which extends along the Pacific coast from lat. 47° S. to the southern extremity of South America. On the southeast it is, indeed, separated from the Atlantic Ocean by outlying portions of Argentina; nevertheless the most important eastern outlet is secured to it by Chilean control of both sides of the Straits of Magellan. It has thus practically an outlook upon both oceans. Moreover, in accounts of the early voyages to the New World as well as in the most recent reports of South American progress, this region figures prominently. An elaborate and authoritative statement in regard to its geography, history, industries, and population has long been desired; and such a statement has recently been published in Spanish at Punta Arenas.*

We learn that the surprising development that has taken place during the last decade in the Territory of Magallanes and the city of Punta Arenas, in population and building as well as in all branches of commerce and industry, in sheep and cattle raising and mining, prompted the city magistrates to enter into arrangements for the preparation of a general census of the Territory; and doubtless one of the motives influencing them is to be found in the fact that erroneous reports had gained credence, both at Punta Arenas and in South America generally, such as, for example, the report that a majority of the inhabitants of the Territory were foreigners.

In order to enhance the importance of the work and give it an official character the commission of Alcaldes requested the national government to lend its approval to the plans for taking this census, and the request was granted immediately. The governor of the Territory applied to the Central Office of Statistics for some instructions that would aid in bringing the projected work to a successful conclusion. That office replied by sending model forms, blanks, etc.,

*Censo Jeneral de Poblacion i Édification, Industria, Ganaderia i Mineria del Territorio de Magallanes, República de Chile, Levantado por Acuerdo de la Comision de Alcaldes el dia 8 de Setiembre de 1906. Pasado i Presente del Territorio de Magallanes. Por Lautaro Navarro Avaria, Médico de Ciudad, Director de la Oficina del Censo. Punta Arenas. First vol., 4to, lxvi and 382 pp., 1907; second vol., 4to, 563 pp., 1908. A map and many illustrations add to the value of the work.

which were to be used in the next general census of the republic. The national organizations which are entrusted with the duty of encouraging various industries also coöperated by furnishing details in regard to their method of gathering information. We may, then, speak of this census as the first to be taken in any part of the republic in conformity with formularies adopted for the census of the whole country, for which plans were being made at that time. But it is much more, as we shall see.

Dr. Lautaro Navarro Avaria, who was appointed director of the work, has given signal proof of ability and enthusiasm. Desiring that the Territory should be correctly described from all points of view, he did not confine the undertaking within the limits of the plan for the general census: rather, he added a second part in which we find full particulars regarding the local administrations, fiscal and municipal; meteorology, demography, nosography; commercial and maritime affairs; the progress of education and the philanthropic or social organizations. The director writes: "I think that the combination . . . makes a very exact picture, representing the grade of advancement attained by the Territory of Magallanes in its short life, which barely extends a bit beyond sixty years." He has not taken into account the nomadic, aboriginal population of the Chilean sections of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego and the western canals of Patagonia and Beagle; but, on the other hand, this survey does include natives under the protection of Anglican and other missions. It appears that the Chilean people themselves require instructions in regard to this region which has been a *terra incognita* even to them ("tan desconocida hasta ahora"). The director of this census thinks that the degree of progress and culture to which this remote territory has attained will be a genuine revelation (*verdadera revelacion*) to citizens of Valparaiso and Santiago. The Territory has received a current of immigration much greater than that which has been available for the development of other portions of Chile; and a great majority of the immigrants have been men who came to take part in sheep-raising and the varied industries, or who were attracted by the discovery of gold.

The total area of the Territory is 171,438 square kilometers (66,861 square miles), the continental part comprising 86,972 and the islands 84,466 square kilometers, according to this authority. In order to bring out more clearly the meaning of these figures, the following areas are offered for comparison: Rumania has 130,000 square kilometres, Uruguay 178,700, Italy 296,000, and the Republic of Chile in all 756,990. The inhabitants number 13,309.

We find 80 per cent. of the population of the Territory concentrated in the city of Punta Arenas and the town (officially designated as a "city") of Porvenir; only one-fifth, or about twenty per cent. in those portions of the rural districts which are dedicated to stock-farming. The climatic conditions are unfavorable to agriculture in the wider sense of the term, but sheep thrive uncommonly well on the immense pastures. The number of shepherds employed decreases steadily as the holdings called *estancias* increase in size. Thus, to cite only one example, in the region of Ultima Esperanza before 1905, when there were many *estancias* owned by different people, the population was greater than it is at present, simply because all but two or three of the *estancias* have been acquired by a single company, the Sociedad Esplotadora de Tierra del Fuego. The rural population is very unevenly distributed, one-third of the total number living in a relatively small area north and south of Punta Arenas and between Cabo Negro and Agua Fresca.

A large majority of the houses are of wood, and a single story in height, the average number of occupants in each being 5.24. The increase in the population of the Territory since the year 1843, when the Chilean government "occupied" it by sending eleven colonists to Fort Búlnes, is traced as follows: The increase is most noticeable between 1885 and 1906. In 1889, Governor Samuel Valdivieso succeeded in attracting to Punta Arenas many families from the central and southern provinces of Chile, by granting to such new comers building sites within the city limits. About the same time the development of stock-farming and the discovery of gold drew immigrants from England, from Buenos Aires, and from Valparaiso. During Manuel Señoret's administration the government continued to offer substantial inducements to settlers. We note that 2,918 persons arrived between 1894 and 1899.

Of the total population, 62.13 per cent., or almost two-thirds, are males, although the equilibrium between the sexes is more nearly established in the Chilean element. Among the foreigners the difference is enormous, 72.41 per cent. being men and only 27.57 per cent. women. The assumption that the foreign element is numerically predominant proves to be wholly unfounded. The census shows that two-thirds of the inhabitants of the Territory are Chileans (exactly 64.06 per cent.) and only one-third, or 35.93 per cent., foreigners. The only part of the Territory in which the foreign element predominates is Tierra del Fuego. A surprising fact brought to light by Dr. Avaria's investigations is that Austro-Hungarians constitute 30.71 per cent. of all the foreigners. The English, form-

erly most numerous, now rank second. Then follow the Spanish, Italian, German, Argentine, and French groups. An analysis of the population with respect to religions shows representatives of the Roman and Greek churches; Protestants (nearly one-half of whom are Chileans); Jews and Mohammedans. The Christians predominate, and a great majority of them are Roman Catholics.

Exceedingly interesting are the statistics relating to instruction, for it is shown that 77.77 per cent. of all inhabitants of the Territory, above the age of six years, can read and write; 1.89 per cent. can read but cannot write; and only 20.33 per cent. are entirely unlettered. But the percentage of illiteracy in the Republic of Chile as a whole was given as 75 per cent. in the census of 1885 and 72 per cent. in the census of 1895! Comparing the Chilean population of Magellan Territory with the foreign element, the former shows 25.51 per cent. of illiteracy as against 13.23 per cent. for the latter. A still more favorable result is obtained if we scrutinize the reports of primary and secondary schools. It appears that more than 83 per cent. of all children of school age can read and write, while less than 17 per cent. must be classed provisionally among illiterates.

Only 14.35 per cent. of the inhabitants are land-owners. More than one-half of all real estate belongs to Chileans; 17.80 per cent. to Austro-Hungarians, and 4.55 per cent. to Spaniards. The city of Punta Arenas, with its suburbs, has 10,103 inhabitants. Porvenir is credited with only 519.

We are dealing here with a handful of people in a vast region, but we share the Director's opinion that he was fully justified in his efforts to enlarge the scope of the work assigned to him. He writes: "We decided to prepare a work which should be the first complete census ever made in Magallanes. As such it may serve as a basis of comparison for those which shall be subsequently undertaken. Moreover it was proper to make known the structure of the population of Magallanes in general, and of its two cities,—so different from that of the rest of the republic." Characteristic of the progressive spirit of this small and remote community is the circumstance that Punta Arenas was the first city of the Republic of Chile to establish a branch of "that altruistic and philanthropic institution, the Red Cross." We read that an organization founded in December, 1903, was officially recognized in 1905 as the "Instituto Central de Chile de la Cruz Roja Internacional."

Punta Arenas already has some of the features commonly associated in our minds with a much larger place: The civil and maritime government houses; the dockyards of the naval stations; hos-

pitals and a lazaretto; formidable prison and penitentiary, police headquarters, and court rooms; social clubs and municipal theatre; public library (sadly limited), English, German, and public schools; three daily newspapers and other periodicals. Its maritime traffic is very little inferior to that of Valparaiso, because its position on the Straits of Magellan makes it quite inevitably the port at which all trans-Atlantic steamers call, to renew provisions or effect repairs of their engines, or perhaps only to pass a few hours while awaiting a favorable moment for passing more or less dangerous points. In the course of a single year (1906) vessels entering the port numbered 969 (tonnage 1,193,556), including 68 warships, 795 merchantmen, and 106 sailing vessels; and vessels leaving the port numbered 979 (tonnage 1,197,347), including 71 warships, 800 merchantmen, and 108 sailing vessels; the grand totals for the year being 1948 vessels and 2,390,903 tons.

It is a pleasure to find in that part of the world a region for which the claim is not advanced that it excels all others in mineral wealth. The Territory of Magellan has no mineral resources that can be compared with those of the provinces of the north and center of the republic; such is the frank declaration made in the second volume. Exploitation of minerals, we are informed, is effective at only two points; and reference is made, first, to the veins of coal (more strictly speaking, lignite), not of the best quality, which for a number of years have been mined at the Loreto, near Punta Arenas, and, second, to the copper ores obtained at Cutter Cove on the peninsula of Brunswick. There remain to be mentioned, so far as our knowledge extends at the present time, only the washings of auriferous soils at some points in Tierra del Fuego and the Minas River; bitumen or asphaltum (of which there are indications, though no considerable deposit has been found); petroleum (doubtful); and calcareous and other salts. A very modest list; and we notice with satisfaction that the writer who contributed this chapter realizes the impossibility of obtaining exact information when mining enterprise is still in the initial period—the period of study and preparation.

Geographical and historical studies in the second volume are particularly interesting. Even such brief enumeration of topics as our limited space permits will convey some idea of the main divisions of the Territory. Thus, separate and distinct consideration appears to be required for the following: North Continental Section; Central Continental Section—Region of Ultima Esperanza; South Continental Section—Chilean Patagonia—Peninsula of Brunswick; Western Islands and Channels of Patagonia; Islands and Channels

north of the Strait of Magellan; Islands and channels south of the Strait of Magellan; Tierra del Fuego; Islands and Channels south and west of Tierra del Fuego. An acceptable offering of more or less new information is made in the pages devoted to lighthouses, ports, and roads; discovery of the straits and subsequent voyages; flora and fauna; and Chilean hydrographic explorations.

EFFECTIVE OCCUPATION OF UNDEVELOPED LANDS

BY

S. P. VERNER*

We shall here consider the application of the scientific method to the "benevolent assimilation" of the still unconquered wilderness of new lands. Here are found a most bewildering array of heterogeneous problems, full of the most complex factors. There are barbarous peoples to be reduced to order, presenting psychological phenomena of the most intricate sort, questions in jurisprudence, in ethics, in political and social science, in military strategy, in governmental policy, each element a world of study in itself alone. Then there are questions in sanitation and hygiene—great heat, or abnormal variations in temperature, noxious insects, venomous or ravenous wild beasts, the stolid inertia of unbroken forest or of sterile desert, or of the rocky rampart of some impeding mountain chain. There are difficulties of navigation, seas and rivers to be charted, marked, and made safe, marshy plains to avoid, and many other questions, including that of profit and loss.

Men have blundered blindly in their contact with these problems, and so we have the sad story of early America, the awful history of most of Africa, the loss of great capital, the blasting of many fair hopes, the vanishing into thin air of many splendid schemes for the extension of civilization. But these things need no longer be. There is a method, capable of clear definition and of precise execution, which may be applied to promote the efficient

* Mr. Verner, well known as economic pioneer and explorer in the Belgian Congo, kindly permits us to print these extracts from a paper not yet published. His long, practical experience gives much value to this suggestive paper.